

Open Doors

The Newsletter of St. James Episcopal Church

December 2015

FROM THE

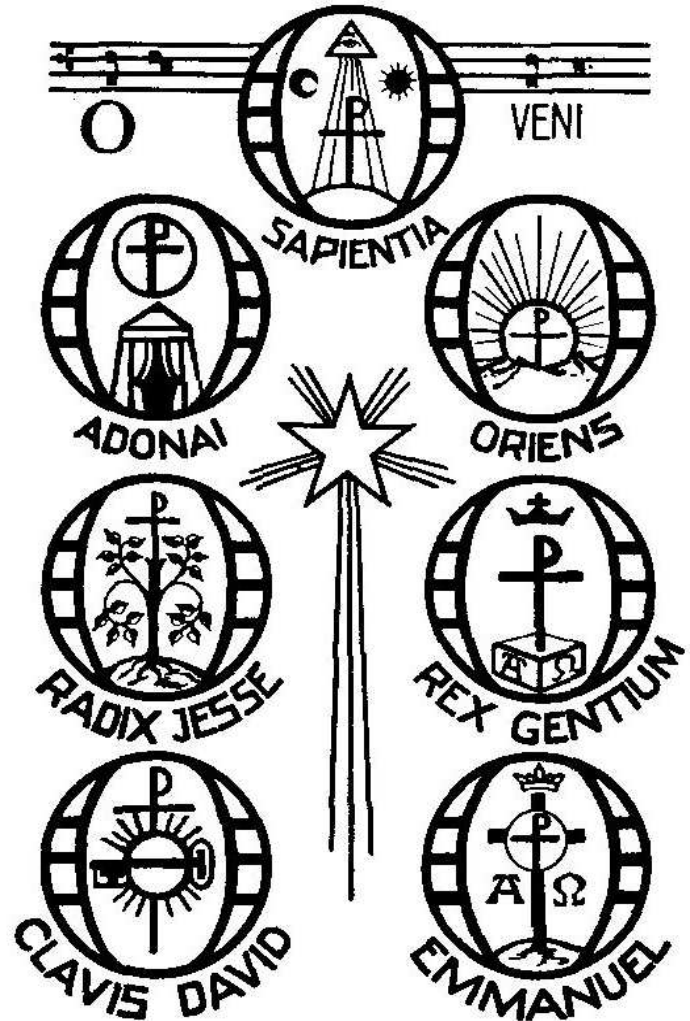


*“O Come, O Come
Emmanuel
And ransom captive
Israel...”*

The haunting tune of
the traditional
Advent hymn with

which we begin our Advent services is a fitting one for this season. In contrast with the brash red and green of Christmas decorations, Advent has a more subdued tone, the deep purple of our church vestments and hangings pointing to the traditional role of this season as a “little Lent”, a time of expectation and preparation not only for the coming of the Christ of the manger, but also his final advent as judge at the end of time.

That focus on Christ is emphasized in the hymn “O Come”. The words are drawn from the “O Antiphons”, seven responses that likely date back to the sixth century, and are traditionally used in worship on the last seven days of Advent. Each antiphon is a title for the Messiah, drawn from the words of the prophet Isaiah and applied to Jesus.



They are:

- * December 17: O Sapiencia (O Wisdom)
Isaiah 11:2-3
- * December 18: O Adonai (O Lord)
Isaiah 33.22

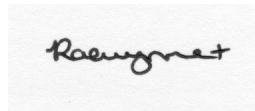
- * December 19: O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse)
Isaiah 11:1
- * December 20: O Clavis David (O Key of David)
Isaiah 22:22
- * December 21: O Oriens (O Dayspring)
Isaiah 9:2
- * December 22: O Rex Gentium (O King Of the Nations)
Isaiah 2:4
- * December 23: O Emmanuel (O With Us is God)
Isaiah 7:14



CHRISTMAS AT ST. JAMES

And so, as the rest of the world rushes headlong into Christmas, we turn our minds and hearts to the one who is himself the Christ, the hope of the world.

Come, Lord Jesus!



Christmas Eve - December 24

5:30 p.m. Family service with Nativity Pageant and Eucharist

9:00 p.m. Traditional candlelit Christmas Eve Eucharist with music for the season

Christmas Day - December 25

9:30 a.m. Christmas Eucharist

Christmas 1 - December 27

9:30 a.m. Service of Lessons & Carols

Christmas 2 - January 3

Epiphany Brunch following the 9:30 a.m. service

THE WARDENS' COLUMN

An Invitation

It is that crazy time of year again when our “to do” lists are too long and our energy levels are falling steadily. The Christmas holiday is before us and preparations are not as gleeful as they once seemed, shopping isn't so much fun, decorating can result in squabbles rather than good cheer.

In Christianity, Advent is this month long season. It is an opportunity to take a spiritual sojourn which can lead to enlightenment and transformation as we are led deeper into the dimensions of this divine journey and some of our hidden selves. In the speed of light tempo our lives take on, we should make some quiet time each day. We need to reflect, to grow and to receive God who is “all in all.”

Here is an excerpt from Rachel Huckstep, a lay chaplain at Kings College, London. It is part of her introduction to an “Advent Retreat.” Perhaps it will encourage us to walk the path to a deeper communion with God.

“I hope that you will walk with me through this Advent season, where we will reach deeper within ourselves and within our world, in preparation for the gift of an intimacy and surrender in Christ, a closer and sweeter knowing that we can ever imagine...”

Let us walk together and pray with each other for the trust to know that all generosity and love is God's presence within us, renewed and recreated each Advent.

Jesus, the Christ, holds the center of our lives, our world and the universe. All points begin and end with him. The ‘work’ of Advent, the preparation that we do, is so

that we might be part of the ‘shining forth’ of Christ's pure concentration of energy, light and power. All the fragments and disintegrations of the world, societies, religions, people, and within me – are held, healed and finally transformed through him this Advent and Christmas season. Let's be brave and make the journey.”

In peace and faith,
Alex & Chris

STEWARDSHIP

Our fall pledge campaign “Walking the Way” culminated last month on Sunday, November 1, All Saints Day. We hope that our journey together this fall has helped to deepen your faith and increase your understanding of what Christian stewardship is. As of today, as a result of your generous giving, we have received 73 pledges totaling \$176,032.00. This includes 5 new pledges and 25 families that increased their pledge from last year. This is an ~6% increase in pledged support from last year. We thank all of you for your faith and support of the ministries here at St. James.

In Christ,
Chris Mauro

BAKE A BATCH FOR THE FOOD PANTRY

Attention bakers! We are running “Bake a Batch for the Food Pantry” during the month of December again.

Many of us enjoy baking cookies for our family and friends. This month, when you are doing your baking, why not bake a batch for the clients of the Smithtown Emergency

Food Pantry, who would really appreciate a special treat during the Christmas season?

Cookies don't have to be fancy – they just have to taste good and travel well. This is a great way to get the kids involved! You can use slice and bake dough, or your own favorite recipes. Cookies may be wrapped by the dozen and labeled as to type and whether there are nuts included.

You may bring the cookies to coffee hour on Sunday, or leave them in the basket in the hallway near the Food Pantry cart. They will be transported to the Pantry at the beginning of each week. If you are able to transport them, that would be a great help.

- Laurie Mannix

CLEAN-UP DAY

The Buildings and Grounds Committee has scheduled a clean-up day after church on December 13th. We will primarily be cleaning out the storage sheds. Please speak with Tony Bastin or Peter Cahill if you have questions or to volunteer.

CONVENTION

It is easy to think that once you have been to one convention, you have pretty much seen them all. I have been to quite a few, but our Episcopal convention is the only one I have ever happily returned to. Sure, you have some reading to do in advance, and votes have to be taken, canons have to be updated, vendor booths visited, and some really terrific books are for sale at 25 cents a piece. Naturally, there are speeches to be heard, and Bishop Larry's address to the convention and the diocese as a whole. The

Bishop was a little long winded in his enthusiasm and conviction, but the Bishops from South Dakota and Navaholand were riveting while revealing the dark past and troubled present of our Native Americans, and the impact of our diocesan grants to these underserved and magnificent people.

Yet that is only one level of communion at the convention. It is important, sometimes a little dry, and always a learning experience. The next level comes when you scratch the surface. It is here that faith and community are abundantly displayed on a more intimate plane. There is comfort, understanding, and always warmth. Our table included a former Bishop from Ghana, Daniel, and the Rector of St. Augustine's, Brooklyn, Christopher. What is the likelihood that I would ever meet them in St. James? What are the chances that we would ever have the time, or share the sense of companionship, to talk about our parishes; or to learn that Daniel has known Bishop Larry for decades and feels faithfully indebted to him; or that Christopher is an artist at heart (I had him sign the cover of my convention booklet!); or stand shoulder to shoulder sharing the same liturgy booklet? What is the worth? It is invaluable!

And what is it like to see our Rector "work the room?" If nothing else it adds a dimension to her priesthood I would not otherwise have witnessed. A quick word with our Bishop which leaves him smiling, a conversation with the Canon to the Ordinary regarding an unclaimed grant (which is now going to PCM), a welcoming embrace for old acquaintances, an on-going discussion among the Deacons. I tried to introduce Raewynne to half a dozen people, then I gave up: they all knew her already, including Bishop Daniel of Ghana. And when the lanyards ran out for our badges people came to Raewynne for yarn! Other local priests look as if they are attending a funeral, or

fulfilling yet another commitment in a lengthy and overbooked calendar. Raewynne is swimming during the breaks with the children of attendees who beg for her company and laughter.

As I have often said, I could just roll out of bed and through the red doors and be in my church. It is tempting to do just that until my days are done. I can feel that I have done my service and enough is enough. And then...I go to convention, or a service at the AME church after Charleston, and think that as lovely and warm as my small and devoted parish is, there is a wider community which I must be a part of, and which will bring me closer to the God I always wish to know more deeply.

I encourage you to sign up for the next convention. Vestry, current and former, should experience this at least once. Parishioners, young, old, students, new parents, or grandparents, should see it as part of the church's calendar year. Once in a lifetime everyone should go to our diocesan convention. It will restore your faith, it will rejuvenate you, it will bring you new friends in Christ.

As for my Roman Catholic friends who lovingly refer to us as "Episcopals" and "Catholic Lite," I challenge any one of them to find a more profoundly uplifting moment than when nearly 500 Episcopalians stand and sing "The Church's One Foundation!"

In Faith,
Alex

OUTREACH

November was St. James' month to staff the Smithtown Emergency Food Pantry. It was a very busy month and, of course, all the Thanksgiving baskets that are prepared and given out make the month even busier. Special thanks go to Claudette Plaschka for coordinating our church's participation, to Pat Westlake who coordinated the entire Food Pantry, and to all our parishioners who have helped out! The Pantry currently needs donations of macaroni & cheese, baked beans, fruit juice, and canned fruit. During the month of December, donations of home-baked cookies would be greatly appreciated. If you see the cart in the Education building is getting full, please take a turn delivering the food to the Pantry. The Pantry is located at St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church in Smithtown, and is open from 9:00 a.m. to Noon, weekdays.

Protestant Campus Ministry at Stony Brook University invites you to attend the Interfaith Center's Festival of Lights program on December 2 at 6 p.m. in the Student Activities Center Ballroom A. This festival celebrates the winter holidays of many of the religions represented on campus. There is entertainment and treats to be tasted that are popular on those holidays. It is always educational and inspiring. PCM students continue to collect toiletries they will package for those in need. Small toiletries may be left in the basket at the back of the church. (If you have larger, full-size bottles to donate, leave them in the cart for the Smithtown Emergency Food Pantry). PCM provides some quiet study space before final exams in December. Students are always looking for snacks to get them through this stressful time. If you have individually-wrapped snack foods, juice boxes, teas, cocoa, etc., you can bring them to me or Raewynne for delivery to the University before December 9. Thank you

to all for your donations!

If you like to knit or crochet, the Seamen's Church Institute is looking for hats and scarves for their Christmas at Sea Program. Warm gifts are given to seamen from all over the world. Raewynne has hat and scarf patterns if you are interested.

Stony Brook Stitchers are members of the faculty, staff, students, and friends of Stony Brook University and Stony Brook University Medical Center who volunteer to make items for those in physical, emotional, or spiritual need withing the SBU campus community. They make: crocheted, knitted, or sewn hats for chemo patients; crib blankets, booties, hats, and blankets for preemies and infants; lap blankets and prayer shawls for psychiatric patients, veterans, patients, and patient family members providing round-the-clock comfort; comfort pillows for post-surgical and oncology patients; hats, blankets, and dog bonz pillows for pediatric patients. They are currently in need of volunteers who have experience in sewing for projects they are working on for the NICU, L&D, and Mother & Baby. For more information, contact Melissa Shampine at 631-444-1371 or email Melissa.shampine@stonybrookmedicine.edu

Pick-a-Star for our developmentally disabled neighbors and our home-bound and nursing home parishioners was held on Sunday, November 29. Pick a star off the Christmas tree in Mills Hall and purchase a gift suggested on the back of the star. For our disabled neighbors, return the wrapped gift with the star securely attached by **Sunday, December 13.** Santa and his elves will deliver the gifts to residents of 5 UCP houses on December 20. (You and especially our teens are invited to be the elves!). For our home-bound and nursing

home parishioners, you can deliver your wrapped gift at your convenience any time before Christmas. See Stephanie Coleman for information.

Our Adopt-a-Family this year, sponsored by St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway, consists of 7 family members: 4 adults and 3 children. The sign up for the gifts was in November. The wrapped gifts will be due back at church by Sunday, December 6. See Donna Guinaw and Claudette Plaschka for more information.

Thank you to those who donated to the Toy Drive sponsored by Episcopal Health Services. Your generosity will bring joy and many smiles this Christmas!

Episcopal Relief and Development is celebrating its 75th Anniversary with a matching gift challenge: All donations made by December 31 will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$750,000 by some generous donors. This means whatever you give before that date will have double the impact. ER&D helps around the globe in so many ways to "heal a hurting world." Tax deductible checks may be sent to:

Episcopal Relief and Development
P.O. Box 7058
Merriemfield VA 221116-7058

Or you can go to www.episcopalrelief.org. You might also want to check out their **Gifts for Life** program. You can donate a flock of chickens, for example, in honor of your usual Christmas gift recipient.

As you can see, there are many ways you can reach out to others during this Advent and Christmas season. God bless you all !

- Sue Krall

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

All St. James parishioners and friends are invited to the annual Christmas Luncheon, which will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 12:30 p.m. at Villa Olivetti, 645 Middle Country Road, St. James. The \$25.00 cost includes choice of an entree, a glass of wine, tax and tip. Contact Fjeril Deal 724-3270 to make your reservation.

2015 PLEDGES

If you made a pledge for 2015, please be sure to have all contributions for the year in by December 31, 2015, so that you may be properly credited for tax purposes.

GIVING THANKS

On Sunday, November 22, we offered thanks for the many good gifts we have received. Here are some responses:

In my life, I give thanks for...

My family
My friends
My parents
My children
Good health

The opportunity to gather friends and family
for our son's wedding
40 years of marriage
Every new day

The joy of my children and grandchildren
All the blessings God has given me
A new granddaughter
My health

All those who give me help and happiness
down this long road
My life through adoption
The kindness of others
The will to better myself and help others

around me
Food, shelter, a job that I love, and the
people in my life who reflect God's love
Healing and recovery
Prayers, support, and love from family and
friends
My cat
The beauty of creation
My godchildren
Good friends
Freedom of thought and speech
The love of my life, my wife
Jesus, for showing me what love is
Living in America
My school
The new babies in church
Jesus Christ - that he died for my sins and
rose from the dead to save me
God, who provides for me, and is so loving
and merciful
God's gifts
Faith, forgiveness, spiritual gifts
Food and shelter
The earth and all its beauty
The warmth and comfort of the sun
The presence of the Holy Spirit
My dog, guinea pig and birds
Being able to dance
School
Music
My next door neighbors
The strength of our congregation in the face
of a violent world

Here at St. James, I give thanks for...

The comfort I feel being part of this parish
community
God's grace
A chance to worship and serve among a
wonderful church family
The peace I find when I am here
The beautiful music
The friendship and generosity of my fellow
parishioners
Spiritual guidance and blessings
The opportunity to be useful
Sunday school

My Confirmation
 A wonderful Christian outlook and mission
 towards our community
 Fellowship
 Personal and spiritual support
 The opportunity to grow in faith with each
 other
 The Lunch Bunch
 The art of the stained glass windows
 The Strawberry & Harvest Festivals
 Volunteering for events, helping with
 landscaping, and maintaining the church
 The body of Christ in the Congregation
 The Service of Worship
 The fellowship of caring Christians
 The inspiration to follow in the steps of
 Jesus
 The wisdom of our leaders: our Rector, our
 Vestry
 The organist – he is a blessing
 Our priest, Raewynne
 The opportunity to serve and be challenged
 into a Christian life
 Sean, Emily, & Lindsey
 Those who teach Godly Play and J2A
 The Altar Guild members who lovingly
 tend the altar and care for our beautiful
 sanctuary
 A community that welcomes our family on a
 very personal level
 My continued conversation with God.

JAM SALE

Just in time for Christmas stocking stuffers
 or hostess gifts, we will be offering St.
 James' famous jam for sale on Sunday,
 December 6 following the services. There
 are a limited amount of flavors available, so
 get yours while we have them.

ANNUAL MEETING & VESTRY NOMINATIONS

It's that time of year again, as we begin to
 prepare for the Annual Meeting and the
 election of new Wardens and Vestry
 members. We are looking for mature and
 prayerful Christians to share in the work of
 leadership.

On Sunday, February 7, 2016, St. James will
 hold its Annual Parish Meeting. All
 parishioners are encouraged to attend. There
 will be updates from the Rector and various
 chairpersons of committees, and the annual
 budget will be presented. At this meeting,
 nominations will be submitted, and elections
 held for the following positions:

- *Warden (1) for a two year term and (1) for
 a one year term.
- *Vestry persons (3) each for a three year
 term.
- *Youth delegate (1) age 18 and younger.

Please speak with Alex or Chris if you are
 interested in learning more.

STONY BROOK MEDICINE

**Do you have leg pain, heaviness, or
 swelling that make it hard to get through
 your day?** Varicose vein disease is often
 overlooked as a cause of leg pain because
 not all varicose veins bulge through the
 surface; some are located deeper in the leg.
 Many people with varicose veins experience
 leg heaviness, swelling, or fatigue of the leg
 that can worsen as the day progresses. A
 vein screening can help determine if there is
 an underlying vein problem. While not all
 varicose veins cause problems, vein-related
 leg pain can, unfortunately, lead to other
serious conditions. So, it's best to protect
 your leg health early and find out how your
 vein circulation problems can be helped.

FREE vein screening includes: a brief ultrasound of the leg veins, assessment of your vein condition, and consultation with our vein specialists. **Vein screening dates** are Saturdays, December 12 and December 19. Location: Center for Vein Care, Nicolls Professional Park, 23 South Avenue, Suite G, Centereach. The screening takes approximately 15 minutes. Appointments are available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration is required. To find out if you are a candidate for a free vein screening, call (631) 444-8346 or visit the Center for Vein Care website to request an appointment.

- *Madelyn Cousins*

NEWS OF THE PARISH FAMILY

At the end of December, **Sue and George Krall** will be moving to their new home in Louisiana, to be closer to their son and his wife. Sue and George have been very much involved in the life of St. James Church for a long time as Vestry member, Outreach Chair, Usher and Greeter heads, Gold Elephant table head, Habitat for Humanity builders, Protestant Campus Ministry secretary and many other activities throughout their time here. We will miss them greatly, and wish them much happiness in their new location.

Following their October wedding, **Leah** (Tarantino) **and Matt Roseto** had a change of plans. Instead of moving to California, they are currently residing in Norfolk, Virginia. Matt was promoted to Sargent in November, and will begin Officer Candidate School in mid-January. Leah has transferred her employment to the local David's Bridal store as she looks for a teaching job.

St. James was saddened by the loss of two

former long time parishioners during the month of November.

Carol Maybee passed away on November 16 after a bout with lung cancer. She had been living in St. Augustine, Florida. There will be a memorial service at St. James sometime in the spring.

Patti Gibbs passed away on November 20 in Kingston, Massachusetts, and was buried at St. James Cemetery on November 25 after a funeral service near her home.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 1 Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m.
Book group 7:00 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 2 Knitters' group 11:30 a.m.
Grave blanket decorating 4:30 p.m.
- 3 N.A. meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 4 Challenger Group party 6:30 pm
Food Addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 6 Holy Eucharist I 8:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m.
Children's Formation classes
Adopt-a-Family gifts due
Jam sale
- 7 Food Addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 8 Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 9 Knitter's group 11:30 a.m.
Women's yoga class 7:00 p.m.
- 10 Finance Committee 4:30 pm
- 11 Food Addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 12 Mills Hall rental 1:30 - 3:30 p.m
- 13 Holy Eucharist I 8:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m.
Children's Formation classes
Pick-a-Star gifts due
Parish clean-up
- 14 Vestry meeting 7:30 p.m.
Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.

- 15 Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m.
Christmas Luncheon at Villa Olivetti 12:30 p.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 16 Knitters' group 11:30 a.m.
Women's yoga class 7:00 p.m.
- 18 Food Addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 19 Piano recital 3:00 p.m.
- 20 Holy Eucharist I 8:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m.
Children's Formation classes
Greening of the church
Pick-a-Star gift delivery
- 21 Food Addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 22 Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m.
Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 23 Knitters' group 11:30 a.m.
Women's yoga class 7:00 p.m.
- 24 **Christmas Eve**
Family Eucharist 5:30 p.m.
Holy Eucharist 9:00 p.m.
- 25 **Christmas Day**
Holy Eucharist 9:30 a.m.
- 27 Service of Lessons & Carols
Holy Eucharist II 9:30 a.m.
- 28 Food addiction group 7:30 p.m.
- 29 Recovery group 7:30 p.m.
- 30 Knitters' group 11:30 a.m.
Women's yoga class 7:00 p.m.
- 31 **New Year's Eve**

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Audrey Ercole
Amy Jeffrey
Marty Scott
Julia White
Kathy Mauro
Robert Bennett
Jade Plaschka
Bob Scott
Pat Martinsen
Shirley Huenlich
Les Bengtson
Laurie Mannix
Ron Davies
Bill Reisenauer
Genevieve Silano

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Peter & Claudette Plaschka



A Blessed Christmas to All !